

Session 14-04 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Barth at 6:00 p.m. on November 10, 2014 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER ARNO, BARTH, BROWN, ROSS

STAFF: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR KOESTER
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

ADVISORY MEMBERS: COUNCILMEMBER ZAK
MARINE TRADES REPRESENTATIVE MARTIN

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Barth called for a motion to approve the agenda.

ARNO/ROSS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 14, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Barth called for a motion to approve the minutes.

ARNO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ BOROUGH REPORT

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Affordable Housing
 - i. American Community Survey: Statistics on Housing in Homer
 - ii. Staff Report: Example Affordable Housing Initiatives

The Commission discussed that if the city is not going to invest in affordable housing, there needs to be investors who come in to start developing. They touched on funding available through grants, HUD, and AHFC. The group also addressed the distinction between affordable housing and low income housing. Affordable housing relates more to the ratio that 30% of one's disposable income would be allocated toward housing. It could be beneficial to exploring tax incentives or exemptions for developers, giving them less burden to carry when developing property.

Other discussion points referenced housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Seniors are coming to Homer and competing with current residents for limited housing and services. It comes back to who wants to invest in our neighborhoods and how do we provide incentives for development. Homer has limited resources, compared to other cities.

Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiative (KPHI) has done some developing in Homer to accommodate low income housing and housing for people with disabilities. Because of challenges of developing in Homer, KPHI has moved their focus to Soldotna, where they are working on several projects with better support from the city. KPHI projects are done with HUD and AHFC money.

They also addressed that there is a need to be able to attract young families to Homer, and question is it affordable for them to live here. Rochester, NY works with participating employers to offer a cash incentive to employees who come to the community and purchase a home. The idea is interesting to put money in up front and the City will continue to get the tax revenue from the family coming to Homer. This raises the issue of sustainable jobs in Homer for families who want to live here.

Chair Barth said he would attend the November City Council meeting and address this information with Council to see if they have any feedback or direction for the Commission on the affordable housing topic. He will touch on tax incentives and value of focusing on younger families.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Park, Art, Recreation and Culture (PARC) Needs Assessment Flier
- B. City Manager's Report

There was brief discussion about the PARC survey and open house.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Zak said it was good discussion tonight. He thinks there is a lot to be optimistic about and maybe a few minor changes and the work this group is doing will help bring families here.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Barth asked the group to reach out to help get more members for the Commission.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Brown appreciates being able to weigh in on these issues because he is investing his next 25 years in the community. He thinks Homer has the potential, that it's their time to enjoy it, and they have the resources to do it.

Commissioner Ross said he's excited to see some positive progress on the affordable housing topic.

Marine Trade Rep Martin said there was good discussion on affordable housing and would like to see some effort put into seeing what can be done to make it easier for KPHI to do their work in Homer.

Commissioner Arno commented they are making progress and he's glad Councilmember Zak is here and can help sell it to the Council.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____